

The City of Rochester's Business Permit Program

The City of Rochester's Business Permit Program (formerly Certificate of Use) is designed to ensure that City businesses are operated safely and legally. Certain types of City businesses are required to obtain a Business Permit, and as with all businesses, must maintain good order on the business premises and obey the codes and laws of the City of Rochester and the State of New York.

The following businesses are required to hold a valid Business Permit in order to operate*:

Automobile Service Facilities: A premises where motor vehicles are sold, leased, repaired or serviced, and including gasoline stations and car washes

Bar: A premise where alcoholic beverages are sold for consumption on the premises

Drugstore: A premises where prescription drugs are sold at retail, together with dry goods, food or beverages

Food Store: A premises in which 50% or more of its sales area is devoted to the sale of food and beverage items to be consumed off the premises

Laundromat: A premises where washing machines and dryers are available for public use.

Restaurant: A premises where food and/or beverages are sold to be consumed on the premises.

Retail Store: Any business which is accessible to the public where goods, merchandise or equipment are sold, rented or leased at retail (excludes non for profit businesses)

Salon: An establishment, other than home occupation, where a hairdresser, barber or beautician conducts their trade, or a body piercing or tattoo studio.

* These are summary definitions. For the complete definitions, [click on this link](#) to view the entire Business Permit legislation.

In order to obtain a new Business Permit:

- Download an application at <http://www.cityofrochester.gov/main/docs/cofu.pdf>, or call 585-428-6520 to have one mailed to you.
- Complete the application, providing all necessary information (including the numbers of any other licenses or permits required for your businesses), and bring it with photo identification and \$25 cash, check (made payable to the City of Rochester Treasurer) or charge, to the City of Rochester Permit Office, Rm. 121-B, City Hall, 30 Church St., Rochester ([click here for a map](#)).
 - Please note that businesses that are required to hold other City permits or licenses, including entertainment, secondhand dealer, amusement center or pawnbroker, do not have to pay the permit fee; however, they are still required to obtain a Business Permit.
- The application will be reviewed by Permit staff to make sure the business meets zoning and code requirements.

- Once the City is in receipt of the application, background checks will be performed. A property inspection may be required; you will be contacted within 30 days to schedule an inspection if it is necessary.
- If no issues of concern have been identified, your Business Permit will be granted within 30 days of receipt. It will be mailed to the address on the application and will be valid for one year, as long as there is no change in the type, location, owner or operator of the business or there is cause for the permit to be suspended or revoked.
- If there is sufficient cause for concern on the part of City officials about the operation of the business, you will be notified in writing of the City's intention to issue a conditional permit or deny a permit and you will have an opportunity to respond. Click [here](#) to learn about the notification and appeals process.

To Renew a Business Permit (formerly Certificate of Use):

If you obtained a Certificate of Use in 2005, you will be notified of the need to renew your Business Permit 30-60 days prior to the month in which it was granted.

- Review the application that is enclosed with the notification and make any changes necessary. If there has not been a change in the type, location, owner or operator of the business, mail in the application.
- Renewal applications that are received within 30 days of receipt of the notification letter will be processed free of charge. Otherwise, enclose a \$25 check made payable to the City of Rochester Treasurer and mail to: City of Rochester, NET Central Records Office, Rm. 007-A City Hall, 30 Church St., Rochester, NY 14614.
- Your application will be reviewed. If no issues are identified, your Business Permit will be granted and mailed to you within 30 days. If there is cause for concern in the operation of your business, you will be notified of the City's intentions within 30 days.
- If the type, location, owner or operator of the business has changed, you must apply for a new business permit.

For questions about the Business Permit program, please call the NET Central Records Office at 428-6520.